



LOUISIANA SENATE

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2013-2014 LEGISLATIVE YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL BEGINS WORK

OUTSTANDING STUDENTS TO HAVE OPPORTUNITY TO INFLUENCE THE FUTURE OF THE STATE

Members of the 2013-2014 Louisiana Legislative Youth Advisory Council (LYAC) began work this month with a special two-day leadership and issues seminar at the state capitol. The new members will work together over the next year in an effort to influence the legislative process by addressing issues affecting Louisiana's youth. The council, overseen by the Louisiana Commission on Civic Education, is a yearly-appointed body composed entirely of students from all over Louisiana.

Now in its sixth year, LYAC facilitates communication between youth, the legislature and key state officials by giving students the unique opportunity to access the workings of state government. LYAC members will have the opportunity to study and address issues of importance to young people, including prayer in schools, education, community service, health and physical fitness, strategies for increasing youth participation and access to local and state governmental services, underage drinking, litter and environmental control, and various other issues.

Members of the council are selected from a wide pool of applicants from around the state who display a strong interest in civic involvement. Two student members serve from each of the congressional districts (12 members) and nine (9) additional members are selected as at-large members. Additional participants are chosen as alternate members of the council. The members must be between the ages of 14 and 19 and enrolled in a public or private high school or participate in a home study program.

"LYAC provides an excellent opportunity to hear the voices and views of the millennial generation. Their knowledge of the legislative process and feedback on prevalent policy issues is impressive and insightful," says Senate President Pro Tem Sharon Weston Broome.

It is a sentiment shared by State Representative Ted James who also works closely with LYAC students on issues and legislation. "I consider it a learning opportunity each time I meet with the Legislative Youth Advisory Council. Their energy is contagious. The

young people ask tough questions and their excitement about not only their future, but the future of our state is unbelievable. Like the LYAC students, my interest in government began in high school, and I truly believe that these students are the future lawmakers of our state. I am looking forward to working with the group throughout the year and hopefully file legislation on their behalf in the 2014 regular session."

The newly selected members of LYAC are:

• Joshua R. Bertalotto	Avoyelles Public Charter School
• Caroline Campbell	Baton Rouge Magnet High School
• Sarah Chestnut	Weston High School
• Alisha Chowdhury	Haynes Academy
• Elijah Evans	Comeaux High School
• Amelia Fertitta	Captain Shreve High School
• Patrick Flanigan	Mandeville High School
• Jacob Foreman	LA School for Math, Science and the Arts
• Morgan-Me'Lyn Grant	New Orleans Center for Creative Arts
• Kyle Alexander Hamer	Lafayette High School
• Hira Hasan	Dutchtown High School
• Sarah Catherine LaBorde	Holy Savior Menard Central High School
• Stephanie Lutfallah	Alexandria Senior High School
• C. Jefferson Manning, III	St. Frederick High School
• Maxwell Martin	McKinley Senior High School
• Wallace Myers	Bethel Christian School
• Shelby Paine	Captain Shreve High School
• Annslee Perego	Bolton High School
• Joel Ramirez-Cedeno	Hahnville High School
• Madeleine Richard	LSU Laboratory School
• Allison Waddell	Captain Shreve High School

Alternate Members are as follows:

• Beverly Brown	St. Scholastica Academy
• Bradley Petras	Northshore High School
• Lily Moret-Kittok	New Orleans Center for Creative Arts
• Grace E. Bridges	Benjamin Franklin High School
• Jarrett Nunez	Grand Lake High School
• Austin Gaspard	Kaplan High School
• Aislinn Kimbrough	Benton High School
• Logan Sepulvado	Zwolle High School
• Jacob Hall	Ouachita Christian School
• Camille Faircloth	Pineville High School
• Derek Brondum	Vandebilt Catholic High School
• Christian Batarsen	Bethany Christian School
• Haillie Bowles	Episcopal School of Acadiana
• Walker Bright	Metairie Park Country Day School
• Samantha Eroche	E.D. White Catholic High School

- Nicholas Juarez Lafayette High School
- Otha Nelson The Dunham School
- Abigail Welch Hathaway High School
- Reagan Woodard C.E. Byrd High School
- Mark Mallory Lafayette High School
- Alex Roberson La School for Math, Science & Arts
- Austin Wendt St. Michael the Archangel High School

Officers elected for the 2013-2014 year include Patrick Flanigan, president; Alisha Chowdhury, vice-president; Morgan-Me'Lyn Grant, secretary; Jacob Foreman, Communications Officer; and Amelia Fertitta, historian.

During the recent two-day leadership and orientation session at the state capitol, the newly-elected 2013-2014 Legislative Youth Advisory Council got a first hand look at the operations of state government through discussions with state officials and community leaders. Governor Bobby Jindal, Secretary of State Tom Schedler, State Representative Ted James, State Senators Sharon Weston-Broome and Yvonne Dorsey-Colomb, Sanettria Pleasant, representing the Attorney General, and Jerry Guillot, City Attorney of Rosedale met with the LYAC members. The students also heard motivational speeches on leadership from LSU students Vilien Gomez, creator of the Window's app "MotivatedGPA" and LSU baseball player Chris Sciambra.

Major initiatives and activities of the council include participation on the Louisiana Public Broadcasting program, Louisiana Public Square; partnering with the Louisiana World Peace Day Committee on world peace activities held at the state capitol each Fall; participating in Global Youth Service Day; awarding LYAC Leadership awards statewide to fellow young leaders each year; promoting opportunities for the youth voice in local government, such as initiating municipal youth councils; and most recently, promoting the community service high school diploma endorsement.

The first regular meeting of the youth council will be scheduled in September.

FOLLOWING ARE QUOTES FROM INDIVIDUAL STUDENTS REGARDING THEIR PARTICIPATION IN LYAC:

Madeleine Richard: LSU Laboratory School, St. Francisville

"Adults have the right to voice their opinions on issues that affect them legislatively through voting. Teenagers do not have that ability. To voice their opinions on legislative matters that affect teenagers, LYAC speaks up."

Caroline Campbell: Baton Rouge Magnet High School, Baton Rouge

"I believe the civic involvement of youth in the community is extremely important because the youth perspective on the community serves as a basis for growth which greatly benefits those who struggle to be heard, future generations who would be facing the same issues, and the current leaders in the community who seek assistance from today's youth to better understand their take on current issues."

Hira Hasan: Dutchtown High School, Geismer

"I am looking forward to an amazing year as a member of LYAC. Although I have learned about the workings of government in school and in the media, I never would have dreamed of experiencing it hands-on at such a young age. I am beyond excited and very grateful to LYAC for giving me this wonderful opportunity."

Sarah Chestnut: Weston High School, Jonesboro

"I'm honored and very excited to serve on LYAC, to have the opportunity to work first-hand with youth all over the state and with Louisiana legislators. I want more youth to get involved in our local and statewide issues. We have a voice and we are the FUTURE of our great State!"

Jefferson Manning: St. Frederick High School, Monroe

"I look forward to bringing any talents I possess to the council and providing a voice for the young citizens of our great state."

Shelby Paine: Captain Shreve High School, Shreveport

"It's imperative we, as youth, invest in our future by gaining knowledge about what is going on and voicing opinions on legislation that affects us. LYAC will offer me the opportunity to serve as a voice for my peers in our state."

Allison Waddell: Captain Shreve High School, Shreveport

"A leader serves through his hands, but acts through the love and dedication of his heart."

Elijah Evans: Comeaux High School, Lafayette

"I am so happy that I have been given an opportunity to be on LYAC, to help make a difference in our state, to be a voice for other youth and to help encourage other youth to become more engaged in our government. I also feel LYAC will help me with child abuse advocacy. One of my favorite quotes is by Gandhi: "Be the change you want to see in the world."

Kyle Alexander Hamer: Lafayette High School, Lafayette

"I wish I had understood the benefits of community service earlier in my life, because without people giving back to their communities, there will be no more communities to give back to."

Wallace Myers: Bethel Christian School, Lake Arthur

"I am honored to serve on LYAC because civic involvement has been the foundation of my character. It has taught me how to communicate with people and better serve my community and state."

Joshua Bertalotto: Avoyelles Public Charter School, Hamburg

"LYAC has truly changed my life. It has been the greatest opportunity to learn about state and local government first-hand and to actually see some of our ideas actually implemented. When youth are engaged and we use our voices in a meaningful way, our possibilities are endless."

Jacob Foreman: La. School for Math, Science & the Arts, Rayne

"I would like to use my position on LYAC to create a safer, more motivating environment for all students across the state. One of my favorite quotes is by Friedrich Nietzsche: "The surest way to corrupt a youth is to instruct him to hold, in higher esteem, those who think alike than those who think differently."

Patrick Flanigan: Mandeville High School, Mandeville

"LYAC gives the youth of Louisiana an excellent opportunity to voice their opinions on policy and to initiate policy in our state's legislature regardless of whether or not they are a member of the council."

Alisha Chowdhury: Haynes Academy, Kenner

"One voice can make a difference. Hundreds can make a room shake. LYAC is the voice of the youth, and we will make a difference and shake the roof of the Capitol."

Morgan-Me'Lyn Grant: New Orleans Center for Creative Arts, New Orleans

"Being a member of LYAC allows me to continue connecting with other students my age who also have an interest in change. I believe that it will take every citizen taking action for there to be any true change in a society as diverse as ours. This doesn't exclude youth. If anything, it requires youth to be active in their communities because we are the future leaders of this world, and we can't change what we don't experience and understand."

Joel Ramirez: Hahnville High School, Luling

"It is a great honor to be a member of LYAC. The experience I will gain from this program will allow me to understand how politics function in our government and gain knowledge of the political side of my career path with the U.S. Armed Forces. LYAC will also help shape my leadership skills with school or in a work environment and teach me the tools to make an impact within my community and state."

Annslee Perego: Bolton High School, Alexandria

"I have recently become a member of LYAC in which I hope to take action on the ideas and concerns of today's youth in order to make a difference for us all."

Stephanie Lutfallah: Alexandria Senior High School, Alexandria

"If Americans are involved civically from a young age, then their future is in safe hands. Finding the opportunity to speak out is all it takes to engage an ambitious student. That is the purpose of LYAC - to open up the doors wide for motivated prospective leaders."

Sarah Catherine LaBorde: Holy Savior Menard Central High School, Alexandria

"I am so excited to be able to serve my community and the state at large on the Legislative Youth Advisory Council. I've seen what LYAC has done in the past, and I look forward to this opportunity to do even more to impact our state in the future. It's such an honor to be selected to such an important group, and I promise to work hard to represent the youth of Louisiana."

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